

The Women of Ibsen's Dramas
as an Expression of
Ibsen's Idealism.

By

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TO MY MOTHER.

PREFACE.

The study here made is an attempt to emphasize a fundamental quality in the work of Henrik Ibsen which has often been underestimated, that is his idealism. At the same time Ibsen's unique portrayal of womanhood has especially interested me, and I find that the two ideas—that of his idealism and that of an analysis of the women of his dramas, fall naturally together. I have therefore included in my survey all of the important women characters in the dramas, and have endeavored to show that through them Ibsen reveals an idealism of high order.

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INTRODUCTION.

Ibsen's fame at present rests so much on his work as a social critic that his idealism is often lost sight of. Ibsen is first of all a fearless scourger of society, a scathing denouncer of philistinism. But although intolerant of evil, he is still the artist, and behind the fiercest of his invectives may be found a veiled and not always apparent idealism. It is in the delineation of the women characters that this idealism finds its most beautiful expression. This idealism, moreover, is an outgrowth of Norwegian social conditions.

In making any study of Ibsen, it should be remembered that he is first Norwegian, second, a cosmopolitan. Even after he left Norway to

live in other lands, his point of view remained Norwegian, though of universal application. The pettiness, the bigotry, the evil that he attacks are directly those of Norway and Norwegian society. It is also significant that nearly all of his characters are Norwegian. Of the women characters in the early dramas included in the authorized edition of his works, only those in *Catiline* and in *The Emperor and the Galilian* are non-Scandinavian except for the minor character, *Anitra*, and the pantomime group of dancing girls in the *Fourth Part of Peer Gynt*. In the dramas after *Peer Gynt*, all are Norse.

The women of Ibsen's dramas fall into decided types which change with Ibsen's own changing point of view and ideals. These types are somewhat limited but are worked out with minute thoroughness. In the earlier Viking dramas, the strong woman, frequently of a 'valkyrie' or ^a demonical type, is contrasted with the gentle, devoted woman. Ibsen's next interest in woman was intellectual in nature. He became a close

student of individualism in woman and an advocate of her right to be an individual. He studied the conventional woman, the doll type, as Nora, the stunted personality, as Betty, and contrasted them with the emancipated woman, as Lona Hessel and Rebecca West. Again the figures change and the symbolic woman appears in the old social setting. First she is the Lady of the Sea, and last of all she is the scarcely human Irene. These are the chief types of Ibsen's women.

Although Ibsen's ideal and types of characters change throughout the different periods of his life, in many respects the last characters are similar to the first. Usually his women are married and of sufficient maturity to have distinct character. As Brandes points out in his Björnson and Ibsen, the women of an Ibsen drama are commonly antithetical in character and are often sisters. His ideal of love also finds a more or less limited expression. For instance, he has made no study of the love and friendship of woman for woman, not even that of sister for sister or mother for daughter. Such love when it exists at all is secondary, incidental.

It is the love between man and woman, of parent for child — usually a son — that he has so powerfully revealed again and again and from many angles. Thus we find Lady Inger's love for her son, not for her daughters. Hiördis had a son, but her great love was for her mate as was that of Rita. Ingeborg and Inga were devoted to their sons; Lady Ragnhild was devoted to her husband rather than to her daughter. Agnes' child was a son, as was Betty's. Helen Alving lived for her son. Even Mrs. Stockman seems more solicitous for her sons than for Petra. Ella and Gunhild both sought the filial affection of the son of Gunhild and Borkman. Gina's love for Hedvig is not emphasized as much as Hedvig's love for her father.

Ibsen perhaps more than any other modern poet possessed the gift of understanding woman's nature. His sympathy is profound and delicate, and his sensitiveness to her most trivial thoughts and acts is little short of marvelous. It is here that the iconoclast, the scourger of social evils, places with a tender hand a halo of idealism on

the brow of womanhood and gives expression to the poetic chivalry locked up in his own soul.

George Brandes* in describing Ibsen says that he knows two expressions in Ibsen's face. " The first," he writes, "is that in which a smile, Ibsen's kind, beautiful smile, breaks through and animates the mask of his countenance" The other was one of almost cruel severity. The latter, Brandes adds, is the face that Ibsen usually turned to the world in his dramas. Yet one occasionally catches a glimpse of that fleeting smile, 'Ibsen's kind, beautiful smile' , as when in *The Wild Duck* he portrays a Hedvig amid all her sordid surroundings or in *The Pillars of Society* a Martha Bernick in revolt against the stifling propriety of a Philistine community. The smile, it is true, is touched with pathos but is yet sweet and kind and reveals an ideal which is often not apparent.

The work already done in the field of criticism of Ibsen's dramas is immense and includes the names

* Björnson and Ibsen.

of the best literary critics. The study made of Ibsen's women is, so far as I have been able to discover, confined to general criticism of the dramas and to a few special studies of the 'woman question'. Much has been said of Ibsen's women in connection with the various problems he considers, for the women are a striking feature of his work. But, so far as I have been able to learn, no definite study has been made of the women of Ibsen's dramas as an expression of Ibsen's own idealism. There are some suggestions and hints, the most important of which is in Jaeger's Henrik Ibsen in the chapter on The Doll's House. The discussion is illuminating and sympathetic, and, had it not been so short, the present paper would not have been written.

I. THE IDEAL OF SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION:
VIKING AND EARLY NORWEGIAN WOMEN.

The literature of Norway and Denmark at the time when Ibsen began to write was still Romantic. Naturally Ibsen was influenced by the leading poets of the period, chief among whom was Oehlenschläger. This ageing Danish poet together with the other romanticists had built up a fanciful idealism. Among their ideals was that of woman's devotion and unquestioning sacrifice. The poetic spirit of the young Ibsen seized upon this eagerly and clung to it permanently, although he discarded one after another other Romantic ideals and fancies.

But even in his early dramas a gradual development of this ideal may be traced. In *The Lady of Östråt* and the three succeeding dramas, Ibsen pictures the high-spirited woman's abandonment to love. Later in *The Pretenders*, *Brand*, and *Peer Gynt*, the heroines are tender, feminine women, — the 'womanly woman'

for whom Bernard Shaw and some other of Ibsen's followers have little sympathy. Nor is this all. The devotion of woman, no longer a blind love for child or mate, becomes to a great extent a devotion to some ideal which she sees in the one she loves.

Ibsen's first drama which attracted attention was *Lady Inger of Östråt*. Whatever its faults may be, the characterization is good, especially of Lady Inger and Elina, the only women characters which enter the play directly. Both characters, and others as well, are historical; but Ibsen has left the facts of history for a more artistic and ideal treatment of the situation. Both women are high souled and show a passionate devotion, the mother to her son, the daughter to her lover. The difference in character between the two women is chiefly owing to their difference in age.

Lady Inger is an early Norwegian woman living in the sixteenth century when Norway was sunk in the deepest degradation. In her youth she had been hailed by her people as their leader and savior. As Ibsen pictures her, she is a high souled woman of

keen intellect who for years has faced the dilemma of serving her native land and of shielding a son whom she had borne by the Swedish Chancellor, Sten Sture. In her the fierce mother love has triumphed. As this son is in the hands of her political enemies, she dare not shake off the bondage of her people. Rather she sits year after year, suffering with them yet fearing for her son should she strike. Not only has she allowed her love for her illegitimate child to tie her hands politically, but for him she also sacrifices her three daughters one after another.

In order to make peace with her enemies, she had given the eldest, Merete, in marriage to a Dane. Little is known of her except that in Elina's words 'she bowed to her mother's will' and lived in such misery in her loveless exile that her wretchedness was known all over Norway. The second daughter, Lucia, was sacrificed to the gay Nils Lykke. When this tardy lover finally asks for her hand, Lady Inger, fearing the indignation of her own people should she yield, refuses. Lucia dies in her shame and grief.

When the story opens, Lady Inger is on the verge of sacrificing her last daughter, Elina. The people have come to her for arms and permission to join an uprising under the leadership of the son of Sten Sture. They hope in this way to shake off the hated Danish yoke. Lady Inger at first consents but a little later, when she finds that her own son's life may be endangered, countermands her orders and sends the peasants away weaponless. That same night Nils Lykke arrives, and Lady Inger, ignorant of the fact that her son is in her own home and in the hands of Nils Lykke, plans to use Elina for the double purpose of foiling the Danes and avenging the death of Lucia. The outcome is tragic. Elina falls under the power of the seducer; the son is killed.

Lady Inger expresses the deepest grief for her son, the wildest devotion. She shows on the other hand little love for the beautiful daughters. That she regrets their fate is evident, but she does not hesitate to sacrifice them. Of Merete's wrecked life, she does not speak one word of heartfelt sorrow. For Lucia's fate she shows a desire for revenge, and

of Elina's tragedy she says regretfully: " Why could I not keep silence? Had she known naught it may be she had been happy — after a kind." And then she dismisses the thought of her daughters with:

" 'Tis well! 'tis well! I shall have my son again.

Of the others, of my daughters, I will not think."

And yet she mourns later:

" Where are my daughters? I see them not."

and:

" My daughters, my fair daughters! I have none anymore. I had o n e left, and her I lost even as she was mounting her bridal bed. — In it lay Lucia dead. There was no room for two."

In this is a note of mother love, but it is insignificant in comparison with that she bore her son, love so great that she could forget for him her daughters and her country.

In contrast is Elina's devotion, which is without the stain of injury to others. Elina is a younger and more innocent Lady Inger. Her pride, her devotion to her fatherland is like that of the young Inger. She grieves that her mother sits idle while Norway suffers,

and she mourns the fate of her dead sister.

It is the love of Elina for Nils Lykke, however, that Ibsen depicts so skillfully and yet so simply. Elina had grown up with a hatred for the famous seducer, Nils Lykke. His ill fame had caused her to despise him although she had never seen him. Much less did she know of his part in causing the death of Lucia. When she first meets him, she throws his proffered flowers at his feet and haughtily leaves him, — but not until she learns that to hate is strangely good and sweet. She struggles with herself and tells herself that his words are full of deceit and his eyes are full of falsehood. "And yet," she says, "no song is sweeter than his words." Even more forceful is the simplicity of the following:

Nils Lykke. — Again you are deep in thought, Elina Gyldenløve! Is it the fate of your fatherland that weighs upon you still?

Elina. — My fatherland? I think not of my fatherland.

Nils Lykke.— Then 'tis the strife and misery of the times that disquiet you.

Elina.— The time ? I had forgotten it.
— You go to Denmark ? Said you not so ?

Nils Lykke.— I go to Denmark.

Elina.— Can I look towards Denmark from this hall ?

Nils Lykke.— Ay, from this window. Denmark lies there to the south.

Elina.— And it is far from here? More than a hundred leagues?

Nils Lykke.— Much more. The sea lies between you and Denmark.

Elina.— [To herself.] The sea? Thought has seagulls' wings. The sea cannot stay it.

Later, after she has yielded herself to him with absolute abandon asking for nothing but to love him, she begs to look once more into his eyes before he goes. When he vows that he will return, she says, " No vows, Nils Lykke! No oaths to me," and explains that she understands that to him love can be but a pastime and woman but a toy. In vain he protests.

She accepts his love on what seems to her shrewd mind can be his only terms.

Such are the women in this early play. In both women is the ideal of fiery love and spiritual devotion. One sacrificed others in her passion; the other sacrificed only herself and asked for no return.

In the next play, *The Feast of Solhoug*, two sisters are the leading characters. Margit, proud and imperious, is restive in her loveless marriage. Signe is gentle and joyous and carefree. Margit has all that riches can bring and leaves the irksome duties of the house to the management of her foolish, characterless husband. But matters of importance are brought to her. Thus, when Knut comes wooing Signe, he addresses himself to Margit rather than to Bengt. She is mistress, but her proud soul loaths her bonds and longs for freedom. She often refers to her life as a prison or a cage. In these early plays Ibsen makes frequent use of such expressions to describe the lot of mismatched women. Margit tells Gudmund:

" My heart's content, I have bartered for gold.

With gilded chains, I have fettered myself."

Again she cries out:

" How long, how long lasts a woman's life?

Sixty years, mayhap— God pity me

Who am not yet full twenty-three!

Hard, so long in a gilded cage to pine;

Hard, a hopeless prisoner's lot — and mine."

She makes frequent reference to the Hill King who ran off with his bride to his hill prison. When Gudmund is about to depart, she cries:

"And I in this cage confined!"

The strength of Margit's love, her pride, her wilfulness are characteristic of a type which was attractive to Ibsen. She is not unlike Lady Inger except that her station in life is less lofty and the conditions of her imprisonment less noble. The main difference seems to be that Lady Inger's life is centered in a reckless and fearful devotion to her son while Margit's life is barren. Margit's life — the exact opposite of Ibsen's ideal — is centered in no one, only in revolt at its own emptiness. Had she been more fortunate in her marriage, the sweep of her love might have been as great as that of Lady Inger's.

Signe, on the other hand, is a less striking and more conventional character. Although she has

less character than Margit, she is saved from being insipid by a gladsome tenderness and grace. She is a young girl, pure and sweet in the first joys of being loved. She is grateful for her sister's care of her. But between sisters so dynamically opposite in character, there can be little true understanding and sympathy. Their love results more from relationship of blood than of spirit. When Margit's wild soul rejoices in the supposed discovery that Gudmund loves her, the difference of character is brought out sharply. Signe shows a conventionally uneasy concern for Margit's exaltation of spirit. Likewise at the feast, when Margit swoons in the frenzy of her grief, Signe evinces more tender solicitude than understanding.

Signe is the clinging vine, but is not without spirit as is evident when she says to Gudmund:

" Oh! thus under cover of night

To steal from the valley where I was born!

Yet shalt thou hear no plaint forlorn.

'Tis for thy sake my home I flee;

Wert thou not outlawed, Gudmund, dear,

I'd stay with my sister."

But a little later, she bursts into tears and says:

"Farewell, my poor sister! Like a mother tender
 Thou hast guarded the ways my feet have trod.
 Hast guided my footsteps, aye praying to God,
 The Almighty, to be my defender."

Margit, too, proves herself to be capable of self renunciation in her generous treatment of Gudmund and Signe. When Knut again demands Signe, Margit gains the victory over self and does not part the lovers but fearlessly refuses the ruffian. Moreover, after Bengt has been killed by Knut's men, to complete her renunciation, she gives up her worldly life and enters a nunnery.

In the next drama, *The Vikings*, is the most extreme type of the "valkyries", *Hiördis*. The chief characters of the play are drawn from the *Volsunga Saga* which is a Northern version of the heroic deeds told in the *Nibelungen Lied*. The counterpart of *Hiördis* in this play is the conventional and weak *Dagny*.

Hiördis is an admirer of brave deeds; all else is of little value to her. Her spirit is proud,

daring, unquenchable. Her taunts are keen. When Gunnar tells her that there is peace between him and Kåre, she answers with suppressed scorn, "Friendship? Well, well, I know that thou art a wise man, Gunnar! Kåre has found mighty friends, and doubtless thou deemest it safest —" Still she honors her husband's vow. She does her utmost, however, to stir up strife between Gunnar and her foster father, Ornulf. When Gunnar tells her that Ornulf and his sons have come in peace, she retorts that this may be true, but it will "sound otherwise in the mouths of men". During the entire scene she incites strife and although unsuccessful for the time is not disheartened or in any way turned from her purpose of creating discord.

At the feast at Gunnar's house, her restless spirit further breaks forth. When Dagny says that the house and all are "fair and goodly", Hiördis, as Margit might have done, complains, "Cage an eagle and he will bite the wires, be they of iron or of gold."

The Viking life is more to her liking, for she says: "Tell me, when Sigurd went a viking and thou

with him, when thou didst hear the sword blades sing in the fierce war game, when the blood streamed red on the deck — came there not over thee an untameable longing to plunge into the strife? Didst thou not don harness and take up armes? " Then she tells of the things she will show Dagny : "They [the whales] dash dash one against another like steel clad warriors! Ha; what joy to be a witch wife and ride on a whale's back — to speed before the bark and wake the storm, and lure men to the deeps with lovely songs of sorcery!" Later she cries: " Think, Dagny, what it is to sit by the window in the eventide and hear the kelpie wailing in the boat house, to sit waiting and listening for the dead men's ride to Valhal."

Throughout the feast scene, Hiórdís' love of bravery and honor spreads itself like fire. She feels keen dishonor in the fact that Gunnar has sent their little son south for safety, just as she had felt with regard to his making peace with Ornulf. She demands that each at the feast recount his most valiant deed. When Gunnar objects that it may stir up strife, she replies, " Little did I deem that Gunnar was afraid."

Hiördis will not be denied. The outcome is tragic. The fact that Sigurd and not Gunnar did the brave act which won her for Gunnar is revealed. To add to the discord, Ornulf's youngest son tells her that Ornulf has gone south, evidently for the purpose of slaying ^{Hiördis's} her and Gunnar's son. Gunnar yields to the urging of his wife and kills the boy to avenge the supposed death of their child. Just then Ornulf returns with the child safe in his arms. He had gone south to save the little one from the vengeance of Kári and to bring it as a peace offering to Hiördis.

But Hiördis shows no remorse. Rather she feels duped and dishonored, and she seeks revenge. She artfully bends Gunnar to her will; she taunts Dagny without pity. At the discovery that Sigurd loves her, her violent soul is roused anew. But hers is not the tender love of which she had been capable years before; it is more the love of a warrior, for she cries, "Were I a man— by all the Mighty Ones, I could love thee even as now I do."

She wishes to go viking with him. " I will follow thee," she exclaims, "in harness of steel, whithersoever thou wendest.--- Not as thy wife, - - = -

but like those mighty women, Hilde's sisters,* will I follow thee, and fire thee to strife and to manly deeds, so that thy name shall be heard over the land."

Sigurd, who is a Christianized viking, cannot yield to her wishes. Gunnar and Dagny stand between them. Sigurd forces Hiördis to admit that should he kill Gunnar in the fight she, according to the Viking code of honor, must avenge Gunnar's death. She sees how hopeless it all is. She tells him that "all good gifts may a man give to his faithful friend — all, save the woman he loves." Then, in the hope of gaining a spiritual union with him, she slays him with the arrow she had prepared for the revenge, and hurls herself into the whirling waters. But in vain, for, while she goes upon the black steeds that gallop to Valhal, he goes to the Christian heaven.

In contrast with Hiördis, Dagny is weak. She is a tender woman, but there is little richness in her tenderness, and Ibsen evidently sympathizes with the lawless individualism of Hiördis rather than with her. She loves Sigurd and does his bidding, but is no mate

*
The Valkyries.

for him. She is loyal and devoted, but conventional and secondrate. Always she is fearful of combat. When her father and brothers come, she is glad yet uneasy lest injury befall them. Hiørdis fills her with horror when she speaks of going viking. Her placid faith in the love of Sigurd — even after she has had her eyes opened, and that rudely enough by Hiørdis — is childish rather than womanly. Hiørdis' judgment of her as "that simpleton" is not altogether unmerited, although Hiørdis had the point of view of an age in which 'blood and iron' ruled. Dagny is shown in a more favorable light, however, when she uses her skill in arousing her father from his mourning for his sons. But even then Dagny appears to less advantage than her terrible foster sister, Hiørdis. Hiørdis is a valkyrie, untamed and over-spirited; Dagny is good but passive and simple.

Ibsen has portrayed in these early dramas the daring woman of the early ages. In *The Feast of Solhoug* and *Lady Inger of Østråt*, the women are devoted to the men regardless of the latter's spiritual qualifications. In *The Vikings at Helgeland*,

the devotion to the man centers in his bravery and daring. Had Sigurd not been the bravest of the brave, he had been nothing to Hildis.

Love's Comedy, which followed, shows an abrupt change in the author's literary ideals. The play is modern and is called a comedy. But the woman who embodies Ibsen's ideal is in spirit like these early women — like her namesake, Svanhild. She is a refined valkyrie of modern society who urges on to greater heights the soul of her lover Falk. The drama is a caustic farce. In it Ibsen attacks the prudential and commonplace love, which, using the figure of Camilla Collet in *Ampmandens Døtter*, he says is as unlike the spiritual love as the tea drunk by lowly folk is unlike the nectar sipped from the teacups of oriental ladies of rank. The meanness of love is all shown, first in the ambition of Mrs. Hølm, whose chief aim in life is to have her daughters, as her eight nieces, "provided for". Then Ibsen pictures the disgusting love of the Strawmans, who at first highly romantic later lost all romance and poetry out of their lives on account of poverty and their brood of a dozen little girls.

Miss Jay and Stiver, who had been

engaged so long that they have almost forgotten what romance was, come in for their share of ridicule. When Miss Jay attempts to revive their romantic days, Stiver answers crossly that he is thinking of promissory notes. Even Lind, who in the course of the action is betrothed to Anna, loses the bloom of romance and becomes prosy and practical.

Ibsen's ideal is found in Svanhild, a high spirited girl, and the fiery young author, Falk. The ideal here revealed is not simply severe and heroic but ascetic. When they find their love, they decide to part and not to see each other again, that their love may not become a lifeless thing as was that of the others. Falk voices this conviction when he says: "When lovers prove that love is, all is over with their love."

The Pretenders appeared next. Here as in Brand and Peer Gynt, which followed, emphasis is laid more on woman's devotion than on her high spirit. This is the period of the ideal of the tender, womanly woman who give all for others.

These women are characterized by a beautiful tenderness which in its conception is perhaps the best expression of Ibsen's lyrical genius.

In the Pretenders Inga, Lady Ragnhild, Margrete, and Ingeborg are all women of this type, depicted in their various relations with the men to whom they are devoted. With Inga it is the devotion of a mother to her son, with Margrete that of a woman to her mate. Lady Ragnhild's devotion is to her husband who has never loved her, Ingeborg's that of a woman to her lover and her son. Sigrid is a sort of valkyrie who urges her brother to righteous deeds. These women are for the most part devoted to the men on account of the latter's spiritual qualities.

Inga's love for her son is that of an ideal mother. For him she bears the ordeal of fire to prove that he, her son, is lawfully born. After this act of devotion, she submits to her son's decree that she live away from him because she is too dear to him. This banishment she bears without

complaint. Later, when she bears a letter from Trond to Bishop Nicholas, the bishop, fearing her reproach, hastily tells her that it was not his counsel which led to her exile. She answers: "What the king does is well done; 'tis not therefore that I come." When Dagfin sees her, he cries out in pity: "Inga! you here, much suffering woman." And she replies: "She is not much suffering who has so great a son." While the king passes by that evening, she hides by the gateway that she may see him unobserved. Later that night she knocks at the door. He had looked so sorrowful, she says, that she could not part again thus. As he takes her in his arms and back into his life, she practically vanishes from the play. Thus in a few strokes, Ibsen has portrayed vividly a most ideal character. The model for Inga, Ibsen said, was his own mother.

Lady Ragnhild appears oftener than Inga but is a less effective character. In the scene where she and Margrete watch the folk moot choose the king, her devotion to Earl Skule is as apparent as is Margrete's to Håkon. Her love for her daughter is not dwelt upon. Mother love in her has been

subordinated to the love for her husband. In the last scene her devotion to him is especially clear cut. Her rage is fierce against the Birchlegs because they have driven him to seek safety at the altar. Moreover, she reproaches her daughter because she has followed Håkon. As Skule appears at the convent door, Lady Ragnhild says: "Ay, let Håkon come; I will not loose you; I will hold you straightly and tenderly in my arms, as I never held you before." When Skule speaks regretfully of his sin, she replies: "Have y o u sinned? Oh, Skule, speak not so. Think you that I should ever dare accuse you! From the first I was too mean a mate for you, my noble husband; there can rest no guilt on any deed of yours."

Even at the last she says: "Flee from the land, Skule; I will follow you wheresoever you will." But when he decides to meet his death, she cries with nobility of soul: "Fare forth in peace, my husband; fare thither where no mocking shade shall stand between us when we meet."

It is Ingeborg's words to Skule, however,

that hold the key to Ibsen's idealism of woman at this period.

At the command of the arch fiend, Bishop Nicholas, Ingeborg appears before Skule to give her son — their son— to him. When Skule regrets their happiness that he has neglected, Ingeborg says: " It was your right." With sorrow Skule speaks of her dwelling in the North and guarding and treasuring her memories in ice-cold loneliness. She replies simply: " It was my happiness." With that she completes her sacrifice by yielding to him their son whom she loves deeply. The Earl is so glad to get the boy that Ingeborg is allowed to slip away unnoticed, whispering to herself: " To love, to sacrifice all and be forgotten, that is my saga."

In an earlier edition, Ibsen had written: "It is man's right to forget." "It is woman's happiness to remember." " To have to sacrifice all and be forgotten, that is woman's saga." This, then is Ibsen's ideal of woman, the crucifixion of self for others.

This is a Christian ideal, and it is significant that Ibsen emphasizes it in his Viking dramas. The ethical code of the Vikings was heathen. But not even in *The Vikings at Helgeland*, where Ibsen is evidently in sympathy with the lawless individualism of *Hiördis*, does he allow the heathen ideal to triumph. *Hiördis* fails in her attempt to unite her life with *Sigurd's*.

Margrete is a most delightful and happy expression of this ideal of devotion to others. After *Håkon* has been chosen king by the folk moot, he sends away his mother and *Kanga* because they are too dear to him. Then he asks *Margrete* to be his queen. Here Ibsen pencils delicately the simple human element in woman's love. *Håkon* has asked her to be his queen. and she is silent:

Håkon.— [Takes her hand.] Answer me.

Margrete.— [Softly.] I will gladly be your wife.
Afterward this follows:

Håkon.— A wise queen can do great things in the land: I chose you fearlessly for I know that you are wise.

Margrete.— Only t h a t ?

Håkon.— What do you mean?

Margrete.— Nothing, my lord, nothing.

Håkon.— And you will bear me no grudge if for my sake you have had to forego fair hopes?

Margrete.— I have foregone no fair hopes for your sake.

Håkon.— And you will stand ever near me and give me good counsel?

Margrete.— I would fain stand near you.

Håkon.— And give me good counsel. I thank you for that; a woman's counsel profits every man and henceforth I have none but you— my mother I had to send away.

Margrete.— Aye, she was too dear to you —

Håkon.— And I am king —

Margrete.—[Smiles sadly.] Ay, 'twill be long, I know, before you send me away.

Håkon.—[Brightly.] Send you away? That will I never.

Margrete is rich in the power of loving. Her love for her father, Skule, is deep notwithstanding his selfish indifference toward her. When her mother reproaches her bitterly, Margrete says:

" Blessed be your lips though they curse me." Here is distinctly the Christian ideal. She pours out the wealth of her mother love on the babe who, she tells her father, is a King-child although she scarcely can remember it. It is her devotion to Håkon, however, that is most severely tested. She allows nothing to part them; even when he tells her that he has doomed her father, she tells him that his doom is just:

Håkon.— And now if you feel that we must part, so let it be.

Margrete.— [Coming close to him, firmly.] We can never part! I am your wife, nought else in the world but your wife!

Håkon.— Are you strong enough? Did you hear and understand all? I have doomed your father.

Margrete.— I heard and understood. You have doomed my father.

Håkon.— And you do not ask to know what was his crime?

Margrete.— 'Tis enough that y o u know it.

Håkon.— But it was to death that I doomed him!

Margrete.— [Kneels before the king and kisses his hand.] My husband and noble lord, your doom was just!

Yet at the last she wavers when her father is in the convent; and, when he asks her if she and Håkon would part if Håkon carried out his threat, she says in grief that they should. But Skule makes this unnecessary.

The only other woman of importance in the play is Skule's sister, Sigrid, who is a noble kind of valkyrie. Here again is the Christian ideal. Sigrid, instead of inciting her brother on to fame, urges him on to the right— and to death. It was she that urged him to deliver his life into the hands of his enemies; it was she who feared to have him seek fame; it was she who at the choosing of the king prayed that the kingship might not be given him. Here and afterwards, while Ibsen uses the high spirited and the gentle woman in contrast, it is the gentle woman who has the leading part. The valkyrie is subordinated. The Christian ideal of gentleness and sacrifice had become more pronounced.

Two years after the appearance of *The Pretenders*, Ibsen finished *Brand*. The poem is a direct attack on the Norwegian people. Although it is modern in its setting, it has not seemed out of place to group it with the early Norwegian dramas, as the general type of women has not changed. Ibsen's idealism is revealed in the beautiful and ideal creation of Agnes as contrasted with her counterpart, Gerd.

Agnes is first conceived of as a light hearted girl frolicking on the mountain side with her lover, Einar. The prototype of Agnes at this time— if she has any, is Signe in *The Vikings at Helgeland*. Of the two Agnes is infinitely the more graceful and fairy-like. The lilting gaiety of her and Einar's mad chase on the heights is brought into strong contrast with the grim sternness of *Brand*. So severe is *Brand's* denunciation of their frivolity that all the delicate tracery of their happiness is wiped out. The gay wings of Agnes have drooped, and she complains that it is cold and dark and that she is weary. Play time for her is over, and she is chiefly conscious of the way in which *Brand*

towered over them. They next meet on the shore where the waters of the fiord are whipped by the tempest. Brand is calling for some one in the crowd to cross to the other side with him to save a dying man's soul. All fear to go; Agnes makes an appeal to Einar, but he has found life too sweet to risk it. At this Agnes amid the protest of the crowd takes the place in the boat with Brand. Brand's stern ideal has won her.

After her choice to remain with Brand, the heroic becomes dimmed and the tragedy of her life appears. She has found Brand stern in his judgment of others; but, in her love and devotion, she has been content except that ⁱⁿ their sunless mountain home, their babe is pale and does not thrive well. When Brand speaks of love, Agnes says:

"And yet— your love is merciless,
You chasten whom you would caress."

Brand asks: "You, Agnes?" and she replies:

"Me? Oh, nay, dear, nay!
On me a lightsome load you lay.
But many falter at the call
To offer N O T H I N G or else all."

Agnes in a tender, womanly way remonstrates against Brand's unbending course, especially with his mother. Yet, though she thinks him too stern, she cries:

"Lead where you will; I follow you."

Their fear for their child's life leads to their decision to flee from their dreadful home. But the terrible thought that he is not following his own preaching of "all or nothing" keeps Brand there. Agnes is still heroic and says:

"God! The gift thou canst require

I can lift it to thy sight!

Guide me through life's martyr-fire."

In Act Four the child has died and Agnes makes pitiful struggles against her grief. Brand is as gentle with her as his unyielding will permits, but still hurts her. The piteous attempts of Agnes to let the Christmas lights shine on the Babe's grave, her loving memory of his baby ways, the expression of her grief when she sees his tiny cloths, are all pictures of a mother's devotion. But Brand demands that she give all. Agnes makes the sacrifice and no longer withholds the little hood damp with Alf's

death sweat or the memories of him, but she says:

"Thou forgettest the words of dread:

Who sees Jehova dies."

She has passed through life's martyr-fire only to have her own life stilled. Nowhere is the devotion and sacrifice of Agnes surpassed.

Gerd is the counter part of Agnes. She is the evil genius of Brand— the spirit of freedom of will, of following one's natural bent. The other women of the drama are of little importance.

Ibsen next wrote Peer Gynt as a companion study of Brand. In it another beautiful woman is created— more ideal in some ways than Agnes. It is Solveig. There is a more idyllic light about her, perhaps, than about any other one of Ibsen's creations. She is more spiritual. She is devoted to Peer and idealizes him even after he has deserted her and has apparently lost every claim to respectability. She sees in him, perhaps, the good that never developed.

She enters the play at the wedding feast. Here she is a young girl with her Bible tied in her kerchief. She stays by her mother and bashfully lowers

her eyes before Peer.

When she refuses to have anything to do with Peer, he, in desperation and at the impulse of the moment, runs away with Ingrid, the bride. But Ingrid cannot keep him since he has seen Solveig. He asks Ingrid if she has a psalm book in her kerchief and gold locks on her neck, if she lowers her eyes bashfully and can deny him, if all becomes holy when one sees her. Ingrid answers, no, and Peer cries: "What, then, is all the rest?"

Solveig, however, comes to the outlawed Peer on the mountains. She has left every thing dear in the valley to come to him. She tells him that he spoke to her through little Helga and through messengers that came in the winds and in silence. The night as the day called her to him; and when she was asked where she was going, she answered that she was going home. Peer says that his hut is too mean for her, but she replies:

"Be it mean or brave, — here is all to my mind.

One so lightly draws breath in the teeth of the wind
Down below it was airless; one felt as tho' choked;

That was partly what drove me in fear from the dæ
 But here, with the fir trees soughing o'er head,—
 What a stillness and song! —I am here in my home."

So she goes into the little log hut, but Peer stays out to fight with his troll thoughts. A little later she calls to him, but he tells her that she must wait, he has a heavy burden to bear. She answers: "Wait, the burden we'll share." But Peer tells her to be patient and goes "roundabout".

After this she appears but twice, each time highly idealized. As a middle aged woman she sits waiting for Peer, singing till he come. Again, when old age has come, Peer returns after his wasted life. He is with the Buttonmolder and demands of Solveig: "Cry out my crime!" She says: "Thou hast made my life a beautiful song." Ibsen again brings out the Christian ideal clearly as in the Viking Dramas. Peer wishes to tell her where he has been, but she says that she knows; he was in her 'faith, in her hope, and in her love'. For the years of desertion she has only love. Peer may have fallen low and become degraded and repulsive, but she sees only the ideal in him. As he sinks down at her feet,

and sleeps in exhaustion, Solveig sings:

"I will cradle thee, I will watch thee;

Sleep and dream, thou, my dear boy."

The other women of the play are minor characters with the exception of Åse. She is by no means ideal, but she has much of the ideal of devotion in her. She is Peer's frail little scolding mother. Ibsen has drawn her with tender, whimsical humor, and she is a caricature of his own mother. She is fretful, bitterly disappointed in her son, whom she has spoiled by dream plays and stories. She scolds him, yet allows no one else to speak ill of him. Although she goes to the feast angry with him, as soon as the smith says they will hang Peer, she cries:

"What! Hang my Peer! Yes, try, if you dare;—

Åse and I — we have nails and claws!"

As they watch him climb the mountain with the bride, she shrieks: "Oh, may you fall down and—". Just then he is in danger and she adds: "Step carefully with your heel." Imperfect as she is, there is a peculiar charm about her. She is intensely human, and a character into which the poet fused his own affection and tenderness.

Peer Gynt is the last of Ibsen's Romantic dramas and the last in which the simple ideal of woman's devotion and sacrifice is found. This ideal has been traced through all of the Romantic dramas beginning with Lady Inger of Østrat. Only one early play has been omitted, — The Emperor and the Galilean — and that because it is non-Norwegian and stands alone as being a historical drama. Moreover, the women characters are subordinated and the study of them would add practically nothing to this paper.

The ideal of these early dramas has developed gradually from its earliest expression of the spiritual devotion of women of lawless, or almost lawless individuality into the Christian ideal of devotion and sacrifice of gentle women. While the ideal of devotion and sacrifice is still found in Ibsen's later works, other elements are added to the ideal and the women are of different types.

II. THE IDEAL OF INDIVIDUALISM: PROVINCIAL TYPES.

Beautiful and charming as was Ibsen's earlier conception of womanhood, it could not remain constant in view of the transforming forces at work in the poet's soul. Ibsen revolted against the injustice and pettiness of his age; and it is not strange that among other disorders he should see the falseness of the old Romantic ideal — "to sacrifice all and be forgotten — that is woman's saga." He began to turn his attention towards the new ideal that woman had a right to her own individuality, as man has; that woman was not merely a creature whose excuse for existence was to love and comfort man. Here again the expression of this modern ideal was owing to Norwegian social conditions. Woman's position in Norway at that time was far from being enviable.

Owing to the sparseness of population in the rural districts, to the isolation of Norway's position, and to the provincialisms that resulted therefrom, advanced ideals of woman's sphere were generally lacking. Woman's one great duty was to care for the wants of her lord. If she were so unfortunate as not to have a 'lord', she was considered "quite insignificant", as Bernick in *The Pillars of Society* described Martha's unmarried state.

Camilla Collet, sister of the Norwegian poet, Wergeland, had struggled for the elevation of woman, and through her writing had influenced Ibsen's own thought. In speaking of the inferiority of the Norwegian woman's position in comparison with that of the women in Sweden and other northern countries and of the Norwegian woman's submissiveness, she writes*, "Women wait patiently like well behaved children for their turn." The men were too busy with other things to see their need and the women too "well behaved" to demand their rights.

There was, then, a need for a protest against

* In Stanton, *The Woman Question in Europe*

the degraded position of woman in Norway. Ibsen, whose ideal of womanhood was always high, gradually came to believe that the hope of the future lay in the enlightened service of womanhood. The first trace of this new problem and ideal in Ibsen's non-posthumous works is in Peer Gynt's speech to Anitra in which he tells her that she shall exist just for him, that he will fill every fiber of her being, that she shall yield absolutely to his will. In the next drama, The League of Youth, he speaks in a clearer note in the outburst of Selma against her doll life, whereas The Pillars of Society approaches the problem of woman's individuality somewhat differently. Here is no petted darling but a group of other types: Betty, who lived servilely under Bernick's loveless tyranny; Martha, who lived true to her ideals but was a victim of circumstances; Lona Hessel, who had learned freedom in the 'big, free world'; Dina, who, young as she was, revolted from the yoke of bigoted convention; and, finally, the group of conventional gossips which was representative of the provincial middle class society.

In *A Doll's House* Ibsen turns his attention directly to the matter of woman's individuality. Nora, whose prototype was Selma, casts aside her shameful marriage bonds. Following this *Ghosts* presents Helen Alving who bore with degradation rather than to offend 'propriety'. After this the poet does not so clearly focus the interest on woman's individuality, although it continues to be of intrinsic value in his work. Petra in *An Enemy of the People*, Gina in *The Wild Duck*, Rebecca in *Rosmerholm*, Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea*, each has an unconventional way of thinking for herself, a trait certainly not found to any great extent in the women of the early Norwegian dramas. Woman has learned to stand on her own feet without depending so much on man even though she love him.

Along with this ideal, however, Ibsen has continued the old ideal of devotion,— but devotion not self effacing in its nature. Rather, as Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea* says, it is freely given and not forced. Woman in this period has head as well as heart, but the emphasis on the head was at the expense

of the heart. The Romantic drama had given way before the modern social drama. We have, therefore, few simple emotional scenes, such as Agnes mourning for her babe or Margrete's tender love for Håkon. Rather Ibsen as a true dramatist keeps to his fixed purpose of insisting that woman be, as Nora said of herself, "a human being if I can be."

The League of Youth appeared in 1869. Owing to the political theme involved, the women are subordinated, an unusual thing in an Ibsen drama. Neither Ragna nor Thora are drawn with the usual vividness of Ibsen's almost matchless skill. Thora is a sweet, womanly woman with good sense and tact. She has assumed the role of peacemaker, but had failed to see Selma's discontent until the outburst came. Ragna is still less clearly portrayed. She has grown up under adverse circumstances and seems to be somewhat crushed and prematurely sobered by misfortune. Madam Rundholmen is not important but is a distinct type. Nor is she in any sense ideal. Ibsen has drawn her with considerable humor as a vivacious, aggressive widow, who avails herself of every possible chance

to change her state of widowhood.

Selma is the only woman of the drama who is of importance, and her importance is not in the play itself but as a prototype of Nora and as being an early expression of a new field of work for Ibsen. Selma as a child was a musical prodigy who attracted the attention of Hire, a rich man. He educated her in the best schools at Berlin. Later she had met and married Erik, the Chamberlain's son. Since her marriage she had been the petted darling of the Chamberlain's family. Her every whim was gratified, she was kept from every thing unpleasant. She spoke of herself as a fairy princess and experienced just about as much of real life as if she had been a fairy princess. She delighted in dress and liked to amuse people. In return she was treated as a doll and not as a woman.

When disgrace was threatening her husband, she was shielded from the truth until she emphatically demanded to be told what had happened:

Selma.— No, I won't go. I will know. Erik, what is it, tell me.

Erik.— It's only that I am ruined!

Thora.— Ruined!

The Chamberlain.—There, you see!

Selma.— What is ruined?

Erik.— Everything.

Selma.—Do you mean that you have lost your money?

Erik.— Money, home, inheritance --everything!

Selma.— Is that what you call everything?

Erik.— Come, let us go, Selma. You are all that I have left me. We'll bear the blow together.

Selma.— The blow! Bear it together? [With a cry.] Do you think I'm fit for that?

The Chamberlain.— For heaven's sake — !

Erik.— What do you mean?

Thora.— Oh, Selma, take care!

Selma.— No, I won't take care! I can't go on lying and shamming any longer! I must speak the truth. I will bear nothing! - - - - - Oh, how cruel you have all been to me! Shamefully -- all of you! It was always my part to accept — never to give. I've been like a pauper among you. You never came and demanded a sacrifice of me! I was not fit to bear

anything. I hate you! I loath you!

Erik.— What's all this?

The Chamberlain.— She's out of her mind!

Selma.— How I thirsted for a single drop of your troubles, your anxieties! But when I begged for it you only laughed me off. You have dressed me up as a doll; you have played with me as with a child. Oh, how I revelled in the thought of taking my share in your burdens! How earnestly I longed for a large and high and strenuous part in life! Now you have come to me, Erik, now that you have nothing else left. But I won't be treated simply as a last resource. I'll have nothing to do with your troubles now. I won't stay with you. I'll rather play in the streets! Let me go! let me go —

Ibsen next wrote *The Pillars of Society*. This drama is rich in the number of women characters — Betty, Martha, Lona, Dina, and a whole room full of conventional dames to serve as a background.

Betty is the dwarfed and stunted individual of the play. She has been pinched by conventional ideas,

has never dared think for herself. Bernick is the great ideal of her life, and she suffers his bullying in a weak, hopeless way. Her cringing attitude toward him is partly explainable by her belief that she had brought him shame and disgrace through the two members of her family. Betty is not at all a high souled woman, rather a loving but conventional wife. She tries to see things through the eyes of the husband whose life she has never shared. When asked about his business, Bernick puts her off with: "Oh, my dear Betty, ladies don't understand these things." We see again how she is shut out of his life when Bernick complains that there is no one in whom he can confide or who can give him support. Betty asks: "No one at all, Karsten?" He answers: "No, you know I haven't."

If there is supposed to be humor in the scenes between her and Bernick, it is overshadowed by the pitiableness of her relation to Bernick. There is little enough to amuse in his bullying and in her apologetic attitude — that of a woman who has lost much and clings in abject fear to the little which remains.

Bernick says of her to Lona in a not very sincere speech: "Betty is so good and docile. In the course of

years she has learned to mould her character to what is peculiar in mine." At another time he tells Lona that Betty has never been what he required. And then Lona points out that it is because he 'has never shared his life with her; because he has never placed her in a true relation to himself; because he has allowed her to go on pining under the weight of shame that he placed upon those nearest her.'

Of Betty's goodness we have proof when Bernick asks her forgiveness, and she answers: " Do you know, Karsten, you have opened to me the brightest hope I have had for many years? - - - For many years I have believed I had lost you. Now I know that you were never mine; but I shall win you."

As a mother we have a more pleasant picture of Betty. She is motherly and kind in her care of Olaf but is not disagreeably solicitous. Her affection for her brother and her half sister appears under the cloud of shame, but at best it is not so very great. Through the things that Betty is not, we learn Ibsen's ideal of woman. Not that he holds her up to scorn; on the contrary he treats her sympathetically and puts

the blame on other people.

Betty's half sister, Lona, has had just the opposite kind of development. In the first place, she was naturally more free in her opinions and more fearless of petty convention and philistinism. Moreover, she had lived away from her home — from Norway, out in the "great, free world" as she expresses it.

Her independence, her biting wit, her strength of character atone in large measure for what she may lack of womanly charm. One can hardly wish her otherwise. She would have made a good suffragette but not a foolish one. Her blunt, brusque ways may not always be pleasant, especially to those whom she despises; but back of it all is a good heart and a clear brain. She also has an uncomfortable habit of telling the truth. A good instance of this is where she is reviewing to Karsten the reasons why he may have loved her. She ends with this thrust: "And then it was a secret between us; no one could ever make fun of your bad taste."

Her really good sense and subtle understanding are admirable, but she is by no means merely a woman

of intelligence. She has also sacrificed greatly for John, her boy, as she fondly calls him. When he was ill, she gave public lectures and wrote a book in order to provide for him. The doing of these things was contrary to good taste according to the standards of womanhood in her old home. But this did not prevent her. Moreover, her devotion to the ideal of her youth was strong enough to bring her back over the sea out of the big, free world. When she found that Karsten Bernick was living below the ideal she had for him, she came back into the bigoted society of her early youth to help Bernick 'find himself'. She also shows a real but not sentimental affection for Betty, Dina, Martha, and others.

Karsten Bernick's sister, Martha, is a character whose idealism includes much of the old and the new views blended. She is at heart a woman of independent thought but, unlike Lona, is diffident about expressing herself. This diffidence is largely due to the subjection she is forced to endure. Nor has she had the advantage of knowing the outside world. She is the most ideal woman in the play and one of the finest that Ibsen has drawn. She is shown in the half lights,

a sacrifice to existing circumstances. When John Tønneson had left for America, she, an old school-mate who loved him, devoted her life to righting the wrongs of which she thought him guilty. She refused marriage and lived in circumstances not pleasant for a woman of her type, only to find when John returned that he did not 'see' her. Her life with its heavy burdens had aged her while he had kept young and fresh in the great world outside. She had inwardly revolted against the petty life about her but could not entirely free herself. On the other hand her devotion is perfect. When she found herself overlooked by John and Dina preferred to her, she gave Dina to him freely. The parting between Martha and Dina is significant:

Martha.— Now go to your happiness, child, over the sea. Oh, how often I have sat in the school room and longed to be over there! It must be beautiful there; the heaven is wider; the clouds sail higher than here: a freer air streams over the heads of the people.

Dina.— Oh, Aunt Martha, you will follow us someday.

Martha.— I? never, never. My life work lies here, and now I think I can be fully and wholly what I should be.

Dina.— I cannot think of being parted from you.

Martha. — Ah, one can part from so much, Dina. But you will never know it my sweet child. Promise me to make him happy.

Dina is a young girl with a strong individuality and a mind of her own. As the daughter of an actress whose shame was freely discussed, she had been taken as an object of the condescending charity of the Society for the Morally Lost. Dina's young soul fretted beneath the burden of their 'goodness' and prudishness until she looked to America as an asylum from "morality". It was this that she had in mind when she asked John if people were very moral in America and added that she did not want them to be so but only 'natural'.

Her answer to Martha's parting plea to make John happy is characteristic: "I will not promise anything. I hate this promising; things must come as they can." And Martha's reply is perhaps the first clearly defined statement of Ibsen's ideal as to

woman's inherent right to individual liberty: "Yes, yes, so they must; you need only remain as you are — true and faithful to yourself."

The other women of the play are important as a group but not as individuals. They form the background of the play. Ibsen depicts them as gossips who can always find some excuse to unearth an old scandal. They have blinded themselves and think themselves charitable and 'proper'. But beneath the thin veneer of charity is selfishness and a lack of true sympathy. They are, furthermore, the products of provincialism, who abhor the outer world and cling to their own community life with all its disguised rottenness and selfishness. In them is Ibsen's indictment of provincialism and the lack of individual growth.

In *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* Ibsen reaches the climax in working out this ideal of woman's individualism. So much has been written about both dramas that little can be added. They both take up the same problems but in different ways. In *A Doll's House* Nora takes refuge from convention in order to gain spiritual and intellectual freedom; in *Ghosts* Helen Alving lets

herself be overruled by convention and suffers the result.

In A Doll's House Nora has spent eight merry years as Hilmar's doll wife, — his "twittering lark", his "skipping squirrel" as he calls her. She is a doll and that is all. She does not comprehend the society in which she lives; she is lacking in moral sense. Her life is a game of playing pretty tricks for the things which she wants. Subterfuge is an art with her; she shows remarkable talent in getting out of a tight place by taking advantage of the slightest means of escape. Furthermore she lies — little white lies — without compunction, but she is not willfully bad. She merely exists in an unmoral, not immoral, state.

The vagueness of her knowledge of social laws is brought out with great care. When Hilmar asks her what if they were in debt and he were killed suddenly, she replies that if such a dreadful thing were to happen, she would not care whether she were in debt or not. Hilmar then asks her: "But what about the creditors?" And she answers: "They! Who cares for them? They are only strangers."

At another time Krogstad shows her that she played him false by signing her father's name to the note, only to get the reply: " That was nothing to me. I didn't care in the least about you. I couldn't endure you for all the cruel difficulties you made, although you knew how ill my husband was." Krogstad tells her that the law does not take motives into account. Nora declares: "Then it must be a very bad law."

Her belief in the miracle which did not happen is likewise childish. As she and Hilmar sit down for their first serious talk in eight years, Nora is groping in the half light of truth. She shows Hilmar how she has been cheated of necessary knowledge and says that she has had a great wrong done her. She acknowledges that the problem of educating her children is beyond her. "There's another to be solved first — I must try to educate myself."

Later as she tells Hilmar that she is leaving him, he asks if she can so forsake her holiest duties.

Nora.— What do you call my holiest duties?

Hilmar.— Do you ask me that? Your duties to

your husband and your children.

Nora.— I have other duties equally sacred.

Hilmar.— Impossible! What duties do you mean?

Nora.— My duties to myself.

Hilmar.— Before all else you are a wife and mother.

Nora.— That I no longer believe. I think that before all else I am a living being, just as much as you are — or at least I will try to become one.

Nora is conscious here of a definite need of individual development. Dina Dorf, likewise, had expressed the same need when she insisted that before she would be John's wife she would work and become 'somebody' as he was, that she would not be merely a thing. Martha also had something of the same thought in mind when she said: "Now I think I can be fully and wholly what I should be."

About religion, too, Nora knows nothing. When she had been confirmed, the clergyman had explained that religion was "this or that", but she was not at all sure that what he had said was true. She

also declares: "I hear, too, that the laws are different from what I thought; but I cannot believe that they are right. It appears that a woman has no right to spare her dying father or to save her husband's life."

Her reason for hiding her forgery so long from her husband is not the desire to hide her guilt from him, for she scarcely realizes that she has committed a crime. It seems to be, perhaps, more than anything else a worldly wise precaution. She tells Mrs. Linden that she may tell Hilmar about what she has done some day, — when she is not so pretty and he not so much in love with her. She wishes to have something to fall back upon, for she feels the insufficiency of their love — that it will not be lasting, that it is not spiritual. But this seems to be vague and indefinite in her mind.

Nora is mostly negative, but not altogether so. She has her ideal, warped though it may be, of devotion. This is shown when she explains to Hilmar what she had expected and feared to have him do, — to shoulder her guilt. Hilmar tells her that a man never sacrifices his honor even for those he loves. Nora replies

that millions of women have done so. Ibsen does not omit the old note of devotion; but now he has made clear that before devotion may have any meaning, a person,— a woman— must become a worthy and intelligent human being, that devotion without a sense of individual liberty is slavery.

Mrs. Linden is Nora's counterpart in the drama. Her personality is not particularly attractive but she is a woman who has learned to do her own thinking and has developed her own life, though not without making a number of mistakes by the way. She has let the hardships of her own life make her somewhat selfish and bitter, but she is not ignorant of the source and the cure of her moral ills. She has sacrificed her best years for others only to find that, when she is left alone with no one to love and to work for, her life is selfish and empty. It is only when she has some one to love and work for, that her life is worth living. Such is the final and highest ideal of Ibsen. Always his message is one of love for others as a cure of mortal ills. And he saw more of this love in woman than in man

and accordingly idealized her more. Once, in Brand, Ibsen has a man expressing the religious phase of this ideal, but Brand's lack of common sense prevents its fulfilment.

In Ghosts the same theme is treated from a different viewpoint. Here Helen Alving has stayed with a dissolute husband, whom it had not been her will to marry. She had loved a young minister and, when she saw the horror of her married life, had urged him to take her and bid convention defiance. He, however, had persuaded her to bear her lot and go back to her husband. Later she bore him a son. Helen Alving's life was spent in covering up the evil of her husband's life. In order to keep him from public shame, she forced herself to share his debaucheries in private. She succeeded in hiding the vice of his secret life so well that he was honored by his fellow townsmen. And, after he had wasted himself by indulgence, in giving himself over to unrestrained "joy of life", and had burned himself out and died, the wife continued to have

his memory honored by the people and by her son.

The son had been sent away as a child to live in the south that he might not breath the poisonous air of his home. But he had been taught to regard his father as a great and noble man. The play opens when the son, Oswald, returns from the South, blighted and on the verge of a mental collapse. He is the victim of his father's sins. It is then that Helen Alving is horrified at the thing that she has done. She has lived a lie, first because of the misconception of her duty that was forced on her, and, later, to keep up a false honor. She sees as the result a son mentally wrecked, and her efforts crumbled to dust. She then realizes that she has not been true to herself and accordingly has brought ruin upon those dearest to her. Life has been to her one long, grim sacrifice, while to her husband, to her son, and to Regina, it has been a period of unrestrained "joy of living". Her sacrifice had been sincere but misdirected and therefore fruitless.

The shackles of convention fall from her, but she realizes too late the wrong that she has done to herself and others. In the scenes between her and Parson Manders, she is the emancipated woman. So far is she emancipated that when she believes that Oswald may be benefitted in the marriage with Regina, she is willing, although she knows that Alving was the father of both. She also tells Parson Manders that she regrets yielding to his conventional demand years before, his demand that they separate and that she return to Alving. She even promises Oswald that when the night of idiocy settles on him she will give him the merciful cup of poison. Whether she does or not is not known definitely, for the drama ends with Oswald's collapse and his calling out for the 'sun'.

Regina is vividly imaged although she does not have much to do or to say. At the opening of the drama, she is studying French in order to make herself a suitable companion for Oswald when he returns. At this time she still believes herself to be the daughter of the rough, renegade Jacob Engstrand

whose offer to do well for her in an inn for sailors she disdains. Oswald returns and all her desires seem in a fair way to be gained, for he is pleased with her. However, when she finds Oswald threatened with lunacy, she casts him aside, — not because she learns that he is her half brother but because he cannot give her the "joy of living". She then goes away to the wild life that her foster father offers her in his sea inn. She is a fettered woman but is held by very different fetters from those that bind Mrs. Alving. She is not the slave of convention but of her own desires. Right and wrong do not count in her values of life,— only pleasure, as she sees it. She, unlike Helen Alving, is faithful to herself as she judges things, but her judgment is limited and selfish.

A Doll's House and Ghosts show the so called emancipated woman in the making. An Enemy of the People and other dramas which follow show her after she is freed.

Again as in The League of Youth Ibsen in

An Enemy of the People chose a theme which required few women characters. And none of those characters are central figures. But two women are in the play, Mrs. Stockman and Petra. Petra like her father is ahead of the times in her way of thinking. Mrs. Stockman, Petra's mother, tends toward the conventional and provincial type of woman. She is devoted to her husband but, not without reason, distrustful of the practical working out of his ideals. .

Petra is an enthusiastic idealist and independent thinker. She objects — at home — that teachers are sometimes forced to teach their pupils lies. She also refuses to translate an English novel because it teaches that virtue is always rewarded, a thing that she no longer believes. She is a staunch supporter of her father in his fight for the health of the town, and proves herself as unyielding as he. She also has advanced ideas which are tabooed in the provincial town. She reprimands Hovstad for his

attitude toward her father's cause. He had taken it up not because he believed it to be right but because he wished to win the favor of Petra. Here Petra shows herself hard, even declaring that she will not forgive him.

Mrs. Stockman is the 'sensible' member of the family. She has been forced to look out for the the material welfare of the family because the good Doctor has neglected or ignored this in the flight after the ideal. Mrs. Stockman is conservative, wishing to do right yet hesitating as well she might to let those near her suffer the consequence of unswerving adherence to the right. Yet, when the entire town goes back on the Doctor, she rises to the occasion and pledges him unhesitating support. But even then she has not the love of the fight, but rather is modest and retiring. Petra is a type of the free woman; her mother, of the woman devoted to her family rather than to an ideal.

Ibsen's next drama was *The Wild Duck*. The poet here has changed his usual order of things.

The characters in the preceeding dramas were from the middle class provincial home. In *The Wild Duck*, however, the action takes place in a home much lower down the social scale.

Gina, Mrs. Sörling, and Hedvig are the women characters of the play. Gina has little education or culture,— she speaks of "them" prints. She is not bothered with ideals but leads a useful, busy life. While Hialmar, her husband, dreams of his proposed invention, Gina attends to their business of photography and to the paying of bills and the receiving of money. She is practical and, while not impatient with Hialmar, insists that he attend to business once in a while.

Things had gone well with them and might have continued to do so had Gina unfortunately not had a 'past'. Previous to her marriage, she had been a poor girl in the service of the Werles. While there she had been forced by her mother into intimate relations with Mr. Werle. She had not considered herself much to blame and had refrained from

mentioning the matter to Hialmar when they were married. Years later when their little daughter is about twelve years old, Werle's would-be -virtuous son meddles with the family affairs and tells Hialmar of the past. Hialmar is furious. Gina explains that she had feared she would lose him if she told him the truth. Hialmar asks if she could keep from writhing with remorse and repentance. She answers: "Oh, my dear Ekdal, I've had all I could do to look after the house and get through the day's work—" Hialmar asks: "Then you never think of reviewing your past?" And she answers: "No, Heaven knows I'd almost forgotten those old stories."

She is both practical and individualistic; she had put the past behind her and could not see why it should be unearthed. She is crude but has much practical wisdom. Mrs. Sörling on the other hand, is a type of free, bad woman who makes no pretense and associates with those who demand none. But while Mrs. Sörling is practically without ideals, Gina is not without hers. It is, however, in

little Hedvig that the most exalted ideal appears.

At the opening of the play, Hedvig is a young girl threatened with blindness. But she is happy enough and scarcely realizes how serious is the trouble with her eyes. She busies herself with her work and thinks out pleasant things to tell her father when he comes. She is diplomatic, and, when there are two 'nice' things, she suggests to her mother that they tell him only one that evening and save the other until they may need it more. She is childish and grieves when her father fails to bring home all the "good things" that he promised her.

When Hjalmar doubts that she is his own child and cries out for them to keep her away, her grief is terrible. It is suggested to her that she may show her love for him by killing her most precious pet — the wild duck. She takes the pistol which Hjalmar and his father before him had lacked the courage to use to end their own selfish troubles. She goes to the attic where the wild duck is kept.

The shot which she fires, however, is aimed not at the wild duck but at her own unhappy little body. Gregers Werle's ideal, misdirected as it was, made a profound impression on her childish mind and she did not hesitate to sacrifice all. Hedvig is a supreme expression of the ideal of devotion and love and of freedom, which shines all the purer by reason of the sordidness of her surroundings. The model for Hedvig was Ibsen's sister, for whom he had deep affection.

In Rosmersholm, which followed *The Wild Duck*, are two women characters, Rebecca West and Mrs. Helseth. The one is in many ways the most powerful of Ibsen's women, the other the most petty and conventional. Rebecca is the most emancipated of the Ibsen women. She is absolutely untrammelled by convention and has a free moral — or unmoral — code of her own. At first she is selfishly individualistic, but later, through the ennobling influence of Rosmer, becomes self sacrificing.

The problem of the ideal here is not intellectual but rather spiritual. During Rebecca's early career

— before the drama opens — she was perhaps on the order of the valkyrie,— a leader who was ready to urge on to deeds the man to whom she attached herself. She like Gina had a 'past' behind her; and as Gina's past did not bother her, so, also, was Rebecca indifferent to her own. But there the likeness between the two women ends, for Rebecca has a powerful and well trained mind. Furthermore Rebecca is more deeply and richly emotional. Of her overpowering passion for Rosmer she says: "It swept over me like a storm over the sea— like one of the storms we have in the winter in the north. They catch you up and rush you along with them, you know, until their fury is expended. There is no withstanding them." Her freedom had been anarchic, lawless,— she had not then been oppressed by the "laws of the stranger" — the Rosmer view of life. Such had been her past; but under the ennobling influence of the Rosmer view of life, she has found a great self sacrificing love — at the expense of her indomitable will. Here is the ideal of the

renunciation of love because of past guilt.

Her past with Dr. West, her passion which drove Beata, Rosmer's wife, to end her life at the mill race for Rosmer's sake stand between any other than a spiritual union with Rosmer. When Rosmer has lost heart and courage because he was led to doubt his innocence of Beata's death, Rebecca's purified spirit reveals itself in a full confession how she led Beata step by step to take her own life. By doing this Rebecca severs even the spiritual tie which binds her to Rosmer. Although she does this for his sake, he is still unable to get back his lost faith in himself and in his power of ennobling lives. Rebecca tells him that he has ennobled her life, but that he cannot believe without proof; and the only proof is that Rebecca go the same road that Beata took. Rebecca does not flinch nor will she be turned aside from making the one last sacrifice for him; but it is not alone that she goes to the mill race, for Rosmer dies with her.

In Rebecca the ideal is that of the ennobled

soul of an emancipated woman who sacrifices all. Here is no haggling about paying the price of guilt, Ibsen never haggles and never lets guilt go unpunished.

In this period of Ibsen's writing, the ideal of personal liberty can be traced from the women who were seeking the development of individuality to those last few who had fully developed their personality. And along with this ideal the old ideal of love and devotion has been continued. When Ibsen wrote *Rosmersholm*, he began to revert to many devices of his youthful Romantic period, such as the use of symbolism. In this last drama there is a trace of this in Rebecca who symbolizes her native land in that her soul is like a storm in the Northland. But through this symbolism can clearly be seen the old ideal of emancipation of mind and soul.

III. SYMBOLICAL AND LATER TYPES OF WOMEN.

During the later years of Ibsen's life occurred a gradual softening of the didactic tone of his work. With this mellowing the ideal of woman's individualism ceased to occupy him so intensely. The arrested lyric genius of his early days recurs in the form of symbolism. This symbolism had perhaps always been present but only in an unobtrusive way.

But later this takes definite expression. In Rosmersholm Rebecca is more or less symbolical of the rugged land of her birth, and Ellida in the next drama suggests plainly 'the lady from the sea'. Hilda in The Master Builder is the spirit of the younger generation; Rita in Little Eyolf suggests selfish passion, and Irene in When We Dead Awaken suggests the resurrected form

of an early ideal. In the same drama Maia and the Hunter are symbols of sexual affinity.

The Lady from the Sea appeared in 1888. Here the 'type' character has disappeared together with the social problem, except as they are found in the Arnholm-Boletta subplot. Symbolism is a distinct element in the drama but is not carried beyond the realm of possibility. Ellida, the central figure, may be taken simply as a psychological — a pathological — study of an individual.

At the beginning of the play, Ellida is the second wife of Doctor Wangel and is suffering from a "haunting home-sickness for the sea". Years before she and a sailor, a second mate, had plighted troth by joining two rings and throwing them into the sea. But the sailor after killing the captain was forced to flee, and Ellida broke off the engagement. Her marriage to Dr. Wangel had been a barter; he was lonely and his children needed a mother — and she sold herself to him. But she had not "taken root" in the home. She was no

mother to his children, and their one babe had died. Since the birth of the child some three years before, a curious change had come over Ellida. She thought that the child had "fish" eyes — eyes that changed with the sea as did those of the sailor. She is tormented with thoughts of her former lover. Her marriage seems evil to her and she lives apart from her husband. Thoughts of the sailor, the things of the sea exert a powerful influence over her; she is allured and affrighted, and has lost her mental balance.

Later the sailor returns as the Stranger. He demands that she go off with him. Wangel, in whom Ellida has at last confided, is ready to use force to keep her, but Ellida shows him how impossible that is. She says: "Wangel, let me tell you this — here in his hearing! I know that you can keep me here! you have the power and no doubt you will use it! But my mind — all my thoughts — all my irresistable longings and desires — these you cannot fetter! they

will yearn and struggle — out into the unknown — that I was created for — and that you have barred against me!"

Wangel sorrowfully lets her choose in freedom. between them. When he does this, she asks: "In freedom and on my own responsibility ? - - - Responsibility, too?" That transforms everything." She is then freed from the fascination of the Stranger and says that she will remain with the Doctor. In explaining her choice, she says: "I was free to choose it, and therefore I was able to reject it." She is saved by these important factors — freedom and responsibility. This again is an expression of Ibsen's ideal of individual freedom.

While Ellida is symbolical of the sea and its change, her stepdaughter, Boletta, belongs strictly to the earlier type of womanhood — the type of woman struggling for mental freedom.

Boletta is of no vital import to the main plot but appears rather in the enlarged subplot. She is a young girl who revolts at the narrowness and the pettiness of her provincial life. She compares the world in which she lives to a carp-pond near the fjord. She tells Arnholm that her first desire is to get away from there and her next is to gain insight into things in general. Although Arnholm is much older than she, he offers her the freedom she desires — in marriage. She is startled and refuses at first, but, after hastily taking in the situation, she changes her mind and accepts him. The reason is evident, for she immediately says: "And I am to see the world, to take part in its life; you have promised me that." "Fancy — to know oneself free — to go out into the unknown world! And then to have no care for the future; no constant fears about money —" She, too, had sold herself.

Her conversation with the weakling Lingstrand brings out Lingstrand's overweening idea

of the subservience of woman to man. Nowhere else has Ibsen made it so strong or so ridiculous as here.

The one remaining character, Hilda, is not greatly developed here. She is a daring, saucy child and appears in a later play, The Master Builder.

Ibsen has introduced a woman far short of anything ideal in Hedda Gabler. Hedda is frankly degenerate but not vulgarly so. In the earlier dramas the central characters among the women are of good or at least passably good morals. It is not until the writing of The Wild Duck that any woman has a very objectionable past. And there Gina felt herself excusable. Rebecca also had a past record not any too clean, but she redeems herself and becomes ennobled. But Hedda is simply degenerate. Conventionally she has not sinned — she was too great a coward — but spiritually she has.

Hedda has suffered from over-refinement. Elemental passions are repulsive to her unless

glozed over with convention. Common-placeness is unendurable. She has no vital hold of life. She bores herself; she does not know what love is, although she has amused herself by playing with it. Her marriage is simply a conventional affair, — she was no longer very young and Tesman was 'correctness' itself. She does not like the simple aunts of her husband and does not appreciate what they have done to make a home suitable for her fastidious taste. Motherhood is repulsive to her. She is wearied of her life of petty social pleasures. She lacks the courage to get out of conventional ruts and do the things which probably attracted her.

It is Thea Elvsted who upsets her conventional life and stirs up the demon in her. When Mrs. Elvsted is announced, Hedda takes her card with the remark: "The girl with the irritating hair." — Hedda as a child had been so jealous of the other's beautiful hair that she had threatened to burn it off. Hedda still has

the same snakelike jealousy of Thea when she learns of Thea's influence over Eilert Løvborg, an old lover of her own. Thea has reclaimed him from an evil life and has inspired him in his writing and in his new ideal of life. She dares leave her husband — a brute — in order to watch over Eilert in the city. Through skillful questioning Hedda learns this and finds that Thea has had her "fingers in a man's destiny." Hedda has no gift for anything of the kind but conceives the idea of undoing what Thea has done. She accordingly taunts Eilert until he drinks a glass — many glasses — of liquor to show her that he dare. That had been his weakness. He then goes out taking his copy of the new book with him to the "bachelors" party. But he does not come back that night. When she accidentally gets the copy of the book — the only copy — she does not hesitate to burn it, for no one will know. When Eilert returns after his night of debauchery and thinks that his book has been

stolen, she does not tell him the truth. When he thinks that all is lost and that he cannot try again, she hopes to have her own fingers in a man's destiny. She gives him one of her pistols that he may use it to end his life "beautifully". But here she is disappointed, for he dies in a disgraceful brawl in which he was trying to recover his "lost" manuscript.

But another lover, Brack, finds that the pistol belongs to Hedda and guesses how Eilert got it. Rather than face the scandal which will arise if it is discovered whose pistol it is, or the alternative of yielding to the demands of her lover, Brack, she takes the other pistol and shoots herself. It was her last resort, she dared not live.

Mrs. Elvsted is broken hearted over the tragic end of Eilert Lövborg. She and Tesman together begin to rewrite Lövborg's book from some notes that were not destroyed. Tesman feels the inspiration of Thea and she seems about to have her fingers in the destiny of another man.

Ibsen reverts again to symbolism in *The Master Builder*, but still the characters and incidents are real. Hilda Wangel, who appeared in *The Lady from the Sea* as a little girl, is symbolic of the spirit of youth; but aside from that she is an intensely interesting young person. She has escaped from the cage, as she called her home — the "carp-pond" as Boletta had called it in *The Lady from the Sea*. There ten years before the Master Builder Solness had become her hero and had promised jestingly it seems that in ten years she could demand a castle and kingdom that he had for her. It is for that purpose that she has come to his home, or rather house.

Hilda is full of youth and vigor; she has a "robust" conscience" and, as she says, is something of a bird of prey. But she is a dreamer. Her kingdom is not earthly, and her castle is only one in the air. And although she is something of a troll, she is an idealist.

Her Master Builder must be brave, and he must be fair to the younger generation, — he must not shut the door in their faces. Like the valkyries, she urges him on to her conception of greatness. For her he dares risk the dizzy climb to the top of the tower on the new house. She hears the harps and the music as he fixes the wreath in place. But the effort is too much for him and he falls. Still she is triumphant, and still she sees him at the top — her Master Builder still.

Besides Hilda, Mrs. Solness and Kaia appear in the drama. Mrs. Solness is a pitiable wreck, who has been chained to the joy-loving Solness. The opportunity which was opened for him to become a Master Builder robbed her forever of her great life work — that of rearing little children. She is a figure of gloom in the house of Solness, and her creed is only that of cold duty. Kaia is a young woman who has been in the employ of Solness. She has fallen under the spell of the Master Builder and prefers

him to the younger generation, Ragner. She is rather incidental in the drama and has not great individuality as has Hilda.

Rita, Asta, and the Rat-Wife are the women characters in Little Eyolf. Rita is a symbol of passionate love, oblivious to all save its own fire. Asta may be considered the symbol of benevolence. The Rat-Wife, Archer suggests in the introduction to his translation of the drama, is symbolical of death.

Rita's is a forceful but selfish nature. She is sensual, of the earth earthy, terribly jealous. She is attractive in her person, vivacious, proud, and above all else, passionate. That she is not ideal is patent. Rita is nearly the opposite of her weak husband, who, when the play opens, has wearied of their passion, but still thanks her for the "gold and green forests" that have made his life so pleasant and leisuresome. For this man Rita has poured out all of her primitive, passionate, jealous love.

She declares that she will share her love for him with no one. She has hated the book which he was writing and which kept him from her. She tells him that she hopes that his half-sister, Asta, will marry Borgheim: "For then," she declares, "she would have to go far, far away with him! And she could never come out to us as she does now." More horrible and unnatural than this is her jealousy of her own son. When Allmers decides that he will give up his book and devote his life to his little crippled son, Rita tells her husband that she wishes the child had never been born. Before, she had pitied him because he was crippled and was neglected by Allmers, but now she hates the child since he is taking Allmers' devotion from her. She also adds that she is not fitted to be a mother to her child.

Every offer of affection which does not equal hers, she disdains imperiously. "Never," she declares vehemently and harshly, "will I

consent to be put off with scraps and leavings." It is not until after the death of the child that she shows that he could ever have had a share in her love:

Allmers.— You never really and truly loved him — never!

Rita.— Eyolf would never let me take him really and truly to my heart.

Allmers.— Because you did not want to.

Rita. — Oh, yes, I did want to. But some one stood in the way — even at first.

Allmers.— Do you mean that I stood in the way?

Rita.— Oh, no — not at the first.

Allmers.— Who then?

Rita.— His aunt.

Allmers.— Asta?

Rita.— Yes, Asta stood and barred the way for me.

Allmers.— Can you say that, Rita?

Rita.— Yes. Asta, — she took him to her

heart — from the moment that happened — that miserable fall.

Allmers.— If she did, she did it in love.

Rita. — [Vehemently.] That is just it! I cannot endure to share anything with anybody. Not in love.

It is not until Allmers and Rita have quarreled that Rita thinks of her selfish life. She knows then that she has lost Allmers and she seeks something with which to make peace with the "great open eyes" of Little Eyolf which she fancies she can see staring accusingly at her from the bottom of the fjord. Allmers advises her to have the entire place razed to the ground when he is gone:

Rita.—[Looks intently at him.] When you are gone?

Allmers.— Yes. For that will at least give you something to fill your life with — and something you must have.

Rita.— [Firmly and decidedly.] There you are right — I must. But can you guess what I will set about when you are gone?

Allmers.— Well, what?

Rita. — [Slowly and with resolution.] As soon as you are gone from me, I will go down to the beach and bring all the poor neglected children home with me. All the mischievous boys —

Allmers.— What will you do with them here?

Rita.— I will take them to my heart.

They speak of how little they have done for the poor. Then the question arises why Rita is going to do this for the poor:

Allmers.— Be quite sure of o n e thing, Rita — it is not love that is driving you to this.

Rita.— No, it is not — at any rate, not yet.

Allmers.— Well, then, what is it?

Rita.— [Half evasively.] You have so often talked to Asta of human responsibility —

Allmers.— The book that you hated?

Rita.— I hate that book still. But I used to listen to what you told her. And now I will try to continue it in my own way.

Allmers.— [Shaking his head.] It is not for the sake of the unfinished book —

Rita.— No, I have another reason as well.

Allmers.— What is that?

Rita.— [Softly and with a melancholy smile.] I want to make my peace with the great open eyes, you see.

But all through the conversation with Allmers, the old love of the earthly crops through. Rita would much rather continue the old life of happiness as before and forget their remorse. But the fact that Allmers has outgrown his passion for her makes that impossible. And so this spirit of selfish love turns to something nobler to fill the void left by disappointed love.

Asta is drawn in contrast to Rita. Rita is selfish, unwilling to share in love with others ; Asta is devoted to others. Especially is she fond

of Allmers, who she learns is not her half brother at all. She also cared for and looked after Little Eyolf. After his parents in a moment of selfish pleasure had left him alone and he had been crippled by a fall, she had taken him to her heart. She also shows affection for Rita, but meets with scant return. To Borgheim, too, she shows sympathy and affection but not love.

But there is one serious blemish on this otherwise ideal character. That appears after she and Allmers realize that they love each other. Borgheim had sought her love but she had denied him. He admitted that he would never be satisfied with less than all her love. Then she is tempted to stay with Rita and Allmers. This she realizes is impossible, and, to escape, she tells Borgheim that she will go to his new life with him. Thus she deceives him and does not tell him that the reason she has accepted him is because she wishes to escape Allmers.

The Rat-Wife is a minor figure and is a weird creation. As has been suggested, she is symbolical of death. Apart from this she is a curious little creature whose business is that of ridding the house of vermin. The purpose of her introduction was perhaps to increase the feeling of impending calamity. This symbolic figure is probably a modified version of the traditional Pied Piper of Hamelin.

John Gabriel Borkman, which followed Little Eyolf, hardly belongs except chronologically and lyrically to this group of later dramas. It is more like the social dramas of the earlier period. Here, however, the problem of woman's individual freedom is scarcely touched. The ideal of womanhood here is rather that of devotion than of individualism.

Ella Rentheim, whom Borkman had sacrificed to his ambition, is a woman robbed of the richness of a life of love for others. As Ella tells Borkman in the second act, she has lived her life as though "under an eclipse", and at length

had found it impossible to love anything or anybody except Borkman's son, Erhart. The idealism of Ella consists in her devotion first to Borkman and then to his son. Between her and her sister, Mrs. Borkman, there has been only strife until the final scene when Erhart has gone from them and they clasp hands over Borkman's dead body.

Ella embodies Ibsen's ideal of the moral right of love, — of its sacred inviolability. This is best shown in the scene between Ella and Borkman:

Ella.— But you bartered me away none the less; drove a bargain with another man for your love. Sold my love for a — for a directorship.

Borkman.— [Gloomily and bowed down] I was drawn by inexorable need, Ella.

Ella.— [Rises from the sofa quivering with passion.] Criminal!

Borkman.— [Starts but controls himself.]

I have heard that word before.

Ella.— Oh, don't imagine I'm thinking of anything you may have done against the law of the land! The use you made of all those vouchers and securities, or what ever they call them, — do you think that I care a straw about them! If I could have stood at your side when the crash came —

Borkman.— [Eagerly.] What then, Ella?

Ella.— Trust me I should have borne it so gladly along with you. The shame, the ruin — I would have helped you to bear it all — all !

Borkman.— Would you have had the will, the strength?

Ella.— Both the will and the strength. For then I did not know of your great, your terrible crime.

Borkman.— What crime? What are you speaking of?

Ella.— I am speaking of that crime for which there is no forgiveness.

Borkman.— [Staring at her.] You must be out of your mind.

Ella.—[Approaching him.] You are a murderer! You have committed the one mortal sin.

Borkman.—[Taking a step towards the piano.] You are raving, Ella.

Ella.— You have killed the love life in me! [Still nearer him.] Do you understand what that means? The Bible speaks of a mysterious sin for which there is no forgiveness. I have never understood what it could be; but now I understand. The great unpardonable sin is to murder the love-life in a human soul.

Ibsen has brought out the same idea before. In *The Pretenders*, the Scald, Jatgier, tells King Skule that it is a great sin to kill a beautiful thought. Ibsen also expresses the same idea later in *When We Dead Awaken*. But nowhere else, perhaps, is it made so forceful as here.

Later Borkman tells her that her heart is the only thing which exists for her. And she exclaims: "The only thing! the only thing!"

You are right there."

Gunhild, Mrs. Borkman, is the direct opposite of Ella. Her hold on life has been her pride, and her sorrow the burden of shame heaped upon her by Borkman's crime. She is proud and unforgiving. After Borkman had served out his sentence, she has lived for years in the same house but without seeing him, hard and bitter towards him. For her son she does not show real affection,—no tender, motherly love. Her demand of him is that he do something so great that it will blot out the memory of the shame and disgrace heaped upon the family name. She is utterly selfish, and her suffering is owing to the loss of position and honor. For those others who lost by Borkman's fall she has no pity. When Ella mentions Foldal, who had suffered in the bank failure, Mrs. Borkman remarks carelessly: "Yes, I believe I heard that he had lost some money. But no doubt it was something quite trifling." Ella says it was all he has, and she answers with a smile: "O, well; what h e

possessed must have been little enough -- nothing to speak of."

Besides these two sisters there are two other women in the play. Mrs. Wilton is a handsome worldly woman who lives for pleasure. She is not of great importance, for she is not one of a type commonly used by Ibsen, nor is she of much import in the plot. She serves to wile Erhart away to a life apart from the two sisters. Little Frida is a young unsophisticated girl who plays readily into the hands of the sophisticated and older woman, Mrs. Wilton. On account of her father's failure she is forced to earn her own living. As she has musical talent, she is able to to do this by playing at dances and other musical entertainments. Little more is shown of her except that she is apparently a modest and timid girl.

Three years after John Gabriel Borkman had been published, Ibsen's last drama appeared, -- When We Dead Awaken. This is the most symbolical

of all his dramas. He has used mystical characters before, but they had always been real enough to be living beings. Ellida, Rita, Hilda might have lived in the real world, but Irene passes beyond the limits of probability as do many other things in the drama.

Both Maia and Irene are symbolical, and each in her own way protests for natural life. Irene desired the height and depth of human passion and love; little Maia, who could never soar so high, was content with a wild, free life,— a life which she found impossible with her husband, the sculptor. She had married him who was considerably older than herself in the vague hope that he would take her to the mountain top and show her "all the glory of the world" as he had promised. He had perhaps taken her to the mountain top, but he could never show her all the glory. This was the case because they were not spiritual affinities. On the other hand the sculptor had neglected the real love which was his in Irene, for he had let her drop out of his life as a mere episode.

An analysis of the characters is made difficult by the fact that they are hardly human at all. Irene is what is left of a beautiful woman after her love has been received lightly by the man to whom it was given. When Rubek had dismissed her after using her as the model for his masterpiece, and had thanked her for the "pleasant episode", Irene's natural womanly soul may be said to have died. She was lost in despair and grief, became mad, or as she expressed it, dead. In her accusation of the wrong that Rubek had done her, is almost an echo of Ella's protest to Borkman: "You have done to death all the gladness of life in me." "You have killed the love life in me." "You have committed the mortal sin." Maia on the hand lives on a lower plane, and yet her life cries out the same thing — disappointment. Her disappointment, however, is in her marriage. She had married for wealth, although she had had another motive than gaining wealth, a motive more laudable if more vague — to see "all the glory of the world."

as Rubek had promised her. But, as Rubek tells her, she is not born for mountain climbing. She is mismated.

In tracing the ideal of the great poet, we have found a gradual and constant change. Thus he began with the ideal of woman's devotion and sacrifice and ends with the same ideal of devotion but perhaps with less of sacrifice. Ingeborg had said: "To love, to sacrifice all and be forgotten — that is my saga." But Irene hates bitterly the thing in Rubek which made him speak of their relation as an episode. With the ideal of individualism which Ibsen developed, the ideal of self-effacement diminished. And in these later dramas he still has his women, such as Ella and Irene, demand that their love should not be sacrificed.

The delicacy of touch with which he began, he preserves to the last; and his ideal women stand out chiseled by an artist's hand, beautiful and noble in the corruption around them. The poet that could comprehend a Martha, a Hedvig, an Ella yet saw in the chaos about him the good and the pure and the lovely.

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A Chronological Table of Ibsen's Plays with
a List of Women Characters in Each.

1854. Lady Inger of Östrat.

Lady Inger.
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1855. The Feast at Solhoug.

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1858. The Vikings at Helgeland.

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1862. Love's Comedy.

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1864. The Pretenders.

Inga of Varteig.
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1866. Brand.

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1867. Peer Gynt.

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Two Old Women with Cornsacks.
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1873. The Emperor and the Galilean.

I. Caesar's Apostasy.

Empress Eusebia.
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II. The Emperor Julian.

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1869. The League of Youth.

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1877. The Pillars of Society.

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1878. A Doll's House.

Nora.
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1881. Ghosts.

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1882. An Enemy of the People.

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1884. The Wild Duck.

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1886. Rosmersholm.

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1888. The Lady from the Sea.

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 Hilda Wangel.

1890. Hedda Gabler.

Hedda Tesman.
Miss Juliana Tesman.
Mrs. Elvsted.
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1892. The Master Builder.

Aline Solness.
Hilda Wangel.
Kaia Fosli.
Some Ladies.

1894. Little Eyolf.

Mrs. Rita Allmers.
Miss Asta Allmers.
The Rat-Wife.

1896. John Gabriel Borkman.

Mrs. Gunhild Borkman.
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